

Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 INR-05 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSC-05

SP-02 /033 W

-----033402 060607Z /13

P 060530Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5369

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 07410

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, RP

SUBJECT: DFA NOTE ON ELECTRONIC EAVESDROPPING

1. SUMMARY. DFA NOTE REFERS TO PRESS REPORTS THAT USG LISTENING DEVICES WERE INSTALLED IN ROK BLUE HOUSE AND THAT SUCH DEVICES HAVE BEEN TRANSFERRED FROM THAILAND AND TO PHILIPPINES. NOTE INQUIRES ABOUT POSSIBILITY THAT US ELECTRONIC EAVESDROPPING OPERATIONS MIGHT BE PROJECTED AGAINST PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT OR PRIVATE ENTITIES. GUIDANCE ON RESPONSE IS REQUESTED. END SUMMARY.

2. ON MAY 2 EMBASSY RECEIVED FOLLOWING NOTE DATED SAME DAY BEGIN TEXT. COMPLIMENTARY OPENING...AND HAS THE HONOR TO REFER TO PRESS REPORTS OF A STATEMENT BY THE FORMER UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO KOREA, MR. WILLIAM PORTER, TO THE EFFECT THAT LISTENING DEVICES WERE INSTALLED IN THE BLUE HOUSE, THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE IN SEOUL, BEFORE HE BECAME AMBASSADOR TO KOREA. IT HAS ALSO BEEN REPORTED THAT SOPHISTICATED LISTENING DEVICES HAVE BEEN TRANSFERRED FROM THAILAND TO THE PHILIPPINES.

- THE DEPARTMENT WISHES TO REFER TO THE DISQUIETING POSSIBILITY OF ELECTRONIC EAVESDROPPING OPERATIONS PRO-CONFIDENTIAL

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JECTED AGAINST BOTH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PRIVATE ENTITIES IN THE PHILIPPINES. THE DEPARTMENT WISHES TO DRAW THE ATTENTION OF THE EMBASSY THAT SUCH OPERATIONS, IF BEING CARRIED OUT, ARE NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TENETS OF FRIENDSHIP, AND BECAUSE OF THIS THE DEPARTMENT IS CONSTRAINED TO PRESENT THIS INQUIRY TO THE EMBASSY. COMPLIMENTARY CLOSING. END OF TEXT.

3. COMMENT:

- A. DFA HAS A PENCHANT FOR SENDING ON OCCASION PROVOCATIVE, ILL-CONSIDERED NOTES ON VARIOUS TOPICS, ALTHOUGH THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN OUR MEMORY THAT DFA HAS ADDRESSED THE SUBJECT OF ELECTRONIC EAVESDROPPING. THE FACT OF THE NOTE, WHICH APPEARS RATHER CAREFULLY DRAFTED, BORDERS ON BEING OFFENSIVE. THE TIMING OF THE NOTE (THE DAY OF THE VICE PRESIDENT'S ARRIVAL) ALSO APPEARS INAPPROPRIATE ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT KNOW IF THIS IS INADVERTENT OR BY DESIGN.

- B. DURING VICE PRESIDENTIAL MEETINGS AT MALACANANG MAY 3, CHARGE ASKED ROMULO'S SPECIAL ASSISTANT MABILANGAN ABOUT NOTE, HOPING TO ELICIT SOME COMMENT ON REASONS BEHIND IT. MABILANGAN WAS AWARE OF NOTE, BUT APPEARED UNCOMFORTABLE WITH SUBJECT AND DECLINED TO OFFER ANY INFORMATION.

4. RECOMMENDATION. WE SEE THREE POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION:

- A. PRIOR TO ANY RESPONSE, WE COULD SEEK TO ELICIT FROM ROMULO AN EXPLANATION FOR NOTE. HOWEVER, WE ARE NOT SANGUINE WE WOULD GET A SATISFACTORY RESPONSE.

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- B. OUR PREFERENCE IS NOT TO SEND A FORMAL REPLY BUT HAVE CHARGE PROVIDE AN ORAL RESPONSE ALONG LINES OF PARA C BELOW.

- C. WE COULD SEND FORMAL REPLY ALONG FOLLOWING LINES: BEGIN TEXT. COMPLIMENTARY OPENING...AND HAS THE HONOR TO REFER TO THE DEPARTMENT'S NOTE NO. 78-1094 OF MAY 2, 1978, ON THE SUBJECT OF ELECTRONIC EAVESDROPPING. THE DEPARTMENT MAY BE INTERESTED IN THE FACT THAT AN AUTHORITATIVE UNITED STATES OFFICIAL HAS PUBLICLY DENIED THE PRESS REPORTS RESPECTING SUCH OPERATIONS IN KOREA. THE TEXT OF THAT DENIAL IS ENCLOSED. THE EMBASSY WISHES TO ASSURE THE DEPARTMENT THAT SUCH OPERATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES, AS SET FORTH IN THE DEPARTMENT'S NOTE, ARE NOT BEING CONDUCTED BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. COMPLIMENTARY CLOSING. END TEXT.

- COMMENT: EMBASSY RECALLS THAT A PUBLIC STATEMENT, AS NOTED IN ABOVE PROPOSED TEXT, WAS MADE WITHIN PAST TWO MONTHS OR SO BY CIA DIRECTOR TURNER. REQUEST TEXT.

5. PLEASE ADVISE. STULL

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